

SOUTHERN GROUP OF STATE FORESTERS



SOUTHERN FORESTS

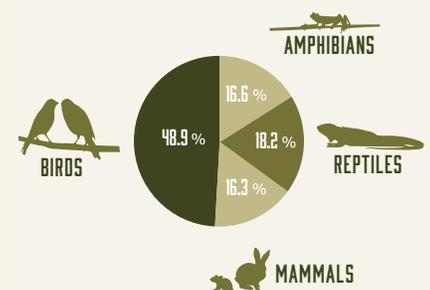
245 - 
MILLION
ACRES



FORESTS OF THE SOUTH

are owned primarily by private landowners, making it the nation's stronghold for private forest ownership.

WILDLIFE



SOUTHERN FORESTS ARE HOME TO

1,076 native animal species, of which 77 are threatened or endangered.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

JOBS 1,075,764 ANNUALLY

OUTPUT \$230.6 BILLION ANNUALLY

FOREST INDUSTRY PUMPS

nearly \$90 billion in value-added services and almost \$50 billion in wages and salaries into the South's economy annually.



TO SEE THE FOREST, FOCUS ON THE TREES

Addressing Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) funding is crucial for all forest stakeholders in the South. Therefore the Southern Group of State Foresters supports federal funding of FIA at a level which maintains a seven-year measurement cycle. This allows states to contribute funding to implement the desired and needed five-year cycle. Without FIA data, forest managers, landowners, and policy makers would be unable to effectively monitor forest trends and make informed management decisions, with potentially dire consequences for our nation's forests.

Southern forests are one of the world's richest resources. Their 245 million acres are home to more than a thousand animal species, they filter and supply clean water and air to millions of people, and provide an abundance of products that enhance our daily lives ... all while beckoning us to come, play and enjoy their diverse beauty.

But that's not all. Southern forests are economic engines for their states, thanks to the private landowners who manage them for their families' livelihood and indeed, the Southern population. That's a lot of responsibility. And that's why keeping a close eye on changes to forestland is critical.

Since the 1930s, natural resource managers have relied on the **Forest**

Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program, the most comprehensive forest monitoring and analysis system in existence. In its current form, FIA is the only reliable means of gauging changes to wildlife habitat, timber supplies, the environment and natural resources. FIA assesses the rate of land use changes, the loss of native plant species, the condition of timber and the spread of non-native insects and diseases on a five year cycle (prior to 2014) in the South.

Within the South, FIA data collection is done primarily by the states and analyzed by the USFS Southern Research Station. FIA data provides critical reports that become trusted handbooks for all who look to balance our resources through growth and conservation.

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CONSERVE | PROTECT | ENHANCE



David Mercker

FIA data, in its current form, has had a critical impact on many specific issues:

- Detecting changes in forest landscapes, which occur more rapidly in the South due to longer growing seasons
- Quantifying resources at risk to certain species-specific pests, including Emerald Ash Borer and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid
- Identifying potential habitat for proposed or listed endangered or threatened species
- Assessing forest disturbances, including wildfire, insects/diseases and extreme weather events
- Measuring carbon storage and change
- Meeting the needs of increasing interest in non-traditional and ecosystem service markets

In order to monitor forests' natural resource trends in a timely and utilizable manner, FIA data needs to be collected in Southern states on a five year cycle. Historically, the USFS has funded the program on a seven year re-measurement cycle, and state forestry agencies invest their own resources or "buy-down" to deliver a shorter five-year inventory cycle. *Southern states invest approximately \$2 million annually*

of state funds in support of FIA program delivery.

However, reduced federal funding for FIA over the last three years has led to a longer cycle length and has been detrimental to our ability to monitor the forest. If insufficient federal funding continues:

- Forest trends won't be evident as quickly, greatly limiting the ability of natural resource managers to address negative trends in a timely manner;
- Current status of, and thus sustainability of resources, cannot be accurately represented with older data
- Data would lose its value for all users, leading to potential overuse of the resource;
- Older data would not reflect the true impact of natural disasters.

Uses of FIA data have proven widely diverse, and new ways to use the data are being discovered every year. It is crucial to the health and sustainability of our forests - along with the wildlife, environment and economies they support - that funding for the FIA program remain strong. 🏡

WATER



OF OUR FRESH WATER RESOURCES

originate from forests that cover about one-third of the United States.

PRODUCTS



THE SOUTH IS KNOWN AS THE WORLD'S "WOODBASKET."

The 13 Southern states contain some of the most productive forestlands in the world and provide for over 18% of the world's pulpwood for paper and paper-related products and 7% of its industrial roundwood.

SGSF STATES



Alabama
Arkansas
Puerto Rico
Florida
Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Mississippi

North Carolina
Oklahoma
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
U.S. Virgin Islands
Virginia